



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Offers Tips To Help Students Stay Healthy This Influenza Season

BISMARCK, N.D. – Because the novel H1N1 influenza virus (swine flu) hits children and young adults especially hard, the North Dakota Department of Health is encouraging students to take steps to avoid influenza, according to Kirby Kruger, state epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health.

The influenza season has begun early this year thanks to the novel H1N1 influenza virus that emerged last April. Students – including college-age students – are in the age groups in which most of the cases of new H1N1 influenza are being reported in North Dakota.

“Now that school and colleges are in session, the potential for the spread of both seasonal influenza and H1N1 influenza is greater,” Kruger said. “With students in classrooms, sports and other extracurricular activities, this is a good time to emphasize that there are a number of things they can do to help reduce their risk of getting influenza this year.”

The Department of Health offers the following tips to help students avoid getting sick:

- When vaccine becomes available, be sure to get vaccinated against both seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza. This will require getting at least one dose of the seasonal vaccine and two doses of the new H1N1 vaccine.
- Try not to touch your eyes, mouth or nose with your hands. Your hands may be contaminated with the germs that cause influenza and other illnesses.
- Do not share items such as soda, water bottles or other drinks; food; toothbrushes; lip gloss; or anything else that may be contaminated with germs from the mouths of other people.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizers frequently throughout the day:
 - After using the bathroom
 - Before eating
 - Before preparing food
 - Right when you arrive at school
 - Right before leaving school
 - After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- Avoid contact with friends, relatives and others who are sick or appear sick. Try to maintain a distance of at least six feet from these people.
- Get plenty of rest, eat nutritious meals and exercise regularly to maintain optimum health.

If you do become sick, follow these steps to prevent spreading the illness to others:

- Tell your parents or guardians when you are not feeling well.
- Stay home from school, work and social activities if you have a fever with a cough or sore throat.
 - Stay home for 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Do not take any aspirin if you become ill. Use other products such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen to relieve fever, headache and body aches.
- Don't accept visitors in your home while you are ill.
- Make sure to cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and throw the tissue away afterwards. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.
- Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands. If you do, wash your hands immediately or use a hand sanitizer.

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger, North Dakota Department of Health, or visit www.ndflu.com.

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